

as the essential subjects of Art, with Shock and Sensation held over as fun standbys or sideshows to feed the mass media. Here, I suppose, is where I draw my line, but it is already washed away.

So we are still in the aftermath of the crisis of the arbitrary, in an expanded field of art that sometimes seems vital and sometimes entropic, in which the breakthroughs of the 1960s appear both as departures to reclaim and as breakdowns to overcome. And here the last words might be the first words of Adorno in *Aesthetic Theory*, written in the midst of the period surveyed by *Challenging Art*:

It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the word, not even its right to exist. The forfeiture of what could be done spontaneously or unproblematically has not been compensated for by the open infinitude of new possibilities that reflection confronts. In many ways, expansion appears as contraction . . .¹¹

EIGHT

THIS FUNERAL IS FOR THE WRONG CORPSE

"It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore," Adorno wrote in 1969, "not its inner life, not its relation to the word, not even its right to exist . . . In many ways, expansion appears as contraction." Today, thirty-plus years later, might this statement circle back so as to include its own implicit assumption about "the end of art"? In other words, might "the end of art" be one more thing about art that is not "self-evident anymore"?

In the trivial sense, of course, this end never came, but then "the end of art" never meant a literal stop to paintings, sculptures, films, novels, and all the rest; what was at issue was the formal innovation and historical significance of these mediums. For many believers art had long served as the essential index to its culture, to its age, or (in its strongest Hegelian formulation) to the realiz-

ation of Spirit in History. Yet for some time now art has not possessed this symbolic weightiness: today it seems divested not only of its role as a signpost to history but also of much regard for historicity – that is to say, for any necessary working-through of its own historically given problems. One might go further: contemporary art no longer seems “contemporary,” in the sense that it no longer has a privileged purchase on the present, or even “symptomatic,” at least no more so than many other cultural phenomena. If the first principle of art history, as Heinrich Wölfflin once put it, is that “not all things are possible at all times,” this premise appears challenged in the present, for good and for bad, with the result that, for some commentators, art history is as kaput as art is.¹

Adorno offered his version of “the end of art” at a time when such proclamations – concerning the end of ideology and philosophy as well – came fast and furious. In 1965, for example, the Minimalist artist Donald Judd averred that “linear history has unraveled somewhat,” and soon thereafter the Conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth announced that modernist painting and sculpture were finished.² But, Kosuth added in a “dialectical” fillip that made all the difference, these specific mediums were now sublated in the general idea of Art, and this Art with a capital A was henceforth the proper object-medium of advanced artists. Presented as the end of Hegelian art history (modernist and otherwise), this position was instead its epitome – of art transcended in philosophy, in art-as-philosophy. The philosopher Arthur Danto had a similar epiphany, which he also dated to the mid-1960s with his first encounter with the *Brillo Box* of Warhol, and in a series of books begun in the 1980s he has made this vision of transcendence his own.³ According to this argument, Warhol perfected the Duchampian question of “what is art?” and so, intentionally or not, brought art into philosophical

self-awareness. But by the same token art no longer had any philosophical work to do: its essential rationale fell away, and henceforth it could do *whatever* – to be evaluated, if at all, by the philosopher-critic according to its degree of philosophical interest (we see, then, who is privileged in this account). This “end of art” is presented as benignly liberal – art is pluralistic, its practice pragmatic, and its field multicultural – but this position is also not-so-benignly neo-liberal, in the sense that its relativism is what the rule of the market requires.

Two other versions of the end, further to the left, also emerged in the 1980s. The first, poststructuralist account was triumphal in tone: art is no more, “representation” is all; the history and theory of art are subsumed by the history and theory of representations, to be understood in terms of textual production and psychological reception. (Visual studies has taken over this version, with revisions that ground representation in social practices.) The second, Marxist account was more desperate: here art is not subsumed by the theoretical category of representation but overwhelmed by the practical dominance of “the image,” the primary form of the commodity in a spectacle economy, from which art can no longer pretend to be distinct.⁴ I don’t disagree with certain aspects of either argument, but they concede too much too quickly, and I want to recover some of what they surrender. I also don’t deny that our condition is largely one of aftermath – that we live in the wake not only of modernist painting and sculpture but of post-modernist deconstructions of these forms as well, in the wake not only of the prewar avant-gardes but of the postwar neo-avant-gardes as well. But there are other responses to this condition than triumphalism or desperation, or indeed melancholy (at the very least we need not pathologize it further). Here I want to ask another kind of question: what comes after these ends, or perhaps

(if they did not quite occur) in lieu of them? As the Mekons sang of the death of socialism after 1989, might these funerals be for the wrong corpse?

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Let me review this condition of aftermath briefly, and begin with the wake of modernism and postmodernism. In previous chapters I alluded to a "dialectic of modernism" that formalist critics like Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried extracted from advanced painting from Manet to Frank Stella. This "dialectic" was pledged to formal unity and historical continuity, and, like the history of premodernist art according to Wölfflin, it was governed by a double dynamic of a continuous "palling" in perception and problem-solving in form; at least in this account (which ignored market considerations), this is what drove the ceaseless search for stylistic variations in modernist painting. As we have seen, this Wölfflinian modernism ran into the sand in the 1960s, but it was kept in place as a foil for practices that emerged to contest it, such as Minimal and Conceptual art, Process and Body art. These practices critiqued this modernism, but in so doing they also continued it, at least as a reference. In its very decay modernism thus radiated an afterlife that we came to call postmodernism (here the term pertains only to critical art of this sort).

This doubling of modernism and postmodernism can be gleaned from a glance at a signal mapping of site-specific art. In "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (1979) Rosalind Krauss presented a structuralist account of such art: neither modernist painting nor modernist sculpture, it emerged as the negative of these categories, and soon opened onto other categories, such as "architecture" and "landscape" and "not-architecture" and "not-landscape."⁵ These terms provided the points of reference by which Krauss plotted

the practices of "marked sites" (e.g., Robert Smithson), "site constructions" (e.g., Mary Miss), and "axiomatic structures" (e.g., Sol LeWitt). Implicit in this account is that postmodernist art was initially "propped" on modernist categories, with all the ambiguity of (in)dependence implied by the word, but that it soon "troped" these categories, in the sense that it treated them as so many completed practices or given terms to be manipulated as such. This map also now registers certain changes since that time: over the last three decades the "expanded field" has slowly imploded, as terms once held in productive contradiction have gradually collapsed into compounds without much tension, as in the many combinations of the pictorial and the sculptural, or of art and architecture, in installation art today – art that, for the most part, fits well enough into the pervasive design-and-display culture critiqued elsewhere in this book. This is only one indication of how postmodernist art, which emerged as a troping of modernist categories, is now trumped in turn.

As a result the model of a formalist modernism challenged by an expansive postmodernism no longer drives or describes significant developments in art or criticism. And the same must be said of its historical double, the model of a prewar avant-garde recovered by a postwar neo-avant-garde (e.g., of Dadaist devices or Constructivist structures recovered in Fluxus or Minimalism). Here again the debate runs back to the mid-1960s when, for radical critics like Guy Debord, the avant-garde was already bankrupt. "Dadaism sought to abolish art without realizing it," Debord wrote in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), "and Surrealism sought to realize it without abolishing it."⁶ The failures were reciprocal for Debord, and any attempt to revive such attempts, as in the various neo-Dadas of the 1950s and 1960s, were farcical: far better to have done with the entire project. This opinion, which evokes the

famous charge of Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) that history occurs twice, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce, was upheld by Peter Bürger in his influential *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1974). In fact Bürger extended the critique: the repetition of the historical avant-garde in the neo-avant-garde was not only farcical; it also reversed the original project to reconnect the institution of autonomous art with the practice of everyday life – recouped it for the very institution that was to be challenged in the first place.

Benjamin Buchloh has exposed the historical lacunae in this argument, and I have posed another model of neo-avant-garde repetition that is not merely recuperative.⁷ More importantly, the 1970s and 1980s saw critical elaborations of the neo-avant-garde, and the 1990s and 2000s have witnessed various attempts to recover unfinished projects of the 1960s as well – that is, to set up a further “neo” relation of recovery vis-à-vis Conceptual, Process, and Body art in particular. Yet this work has not yet demonstrated whether critiques as singular as Conceptual, Process, and Body art can be transformed into a tradition (or tradition-substitute) coherent enough to support contemporary practice. As a result the recursive strategy of the “neo” appears as attenuated today as the oppositional logic of the “post” is tired: neither suffices as a strong paradigm for artistic or critical practice, and no other model stands in their stead. For many this is a good thing: it permits artistic diversity; “weak” theory is better than strong; and so on. But, as I have argued elsewhere in this book, our paradigm-of-no-paradigm can also abet a flat indifference, a stagnant incommensurability, a new Alexandrianism, and this posthistorical default of contemporary art is no improvement on the old historicist determinism of modernist art. All of us (artists, critics, curators, historians, viewers) need some narrative to focus our present practices – situated stories, not *grands*

récits. Without this guide we may remain swamped in the double wake of post/modernism and the neo/avant-garde. Rather than deny this aftermath, then, why not admit it and ask “what now, what else?”

Let me recall another riddle posed by Adorno in the mid-1960s, which is still an unsettled origin of so much art today. If his worry about the arbitrariness of art begins his *Aesthetic Theory*, his riddle about the relevance of philosophy opens his *Negative Dialectics* (1966): “Philosophy, which once seemed absolute, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed.”⁸ Here Adorno responds to another famous charge of Marx, this one in the “Theses on Feuerbach” (1845), that philosophers have only interpreted the world when the point is to change it.⁹ In a sense, just as philosophy missed its moment of realization, so the avant-garde missed its moment; and I wonder if this parallel guided Adorno and, further, if we might substitute “art” where he writes “philosophy.” In this case, might art be granted the ambiguous stay of sentence that Adorno grants philosophy – the possibility of “living on”? (Again, this is the possibility that critics like Debord and Bürger foreclose in the same moment.) If so, what might this “living on” be in the present? Not the overt repetition of avant-garde devices that characterized much neo-avant-garde art of the 1950s and 1960s (e.g., monochrome painting, collage, readymade objects), and perhaps not the attenuated working-through of such strategies that characterized much neo-avant-garde art of the 1970s and 1980s either (e.g., institution-critiques that are sometimes difficult to decipher even for initiates). Maybe this living-on is not a repeating so much as a making-new or simply a making-do with what-comes-after, a beginning again and/or elsewhere.

At this point I can only sketch a few versions of this living-on, which I will call "traumatic," "spectral," "nonsynchronous," and "incongruent." As these categories tend to cross, this taxonomy is artificial, and my disparate examples (which include fiction and film) do not pretend to be comprehensive; nonetheless, they may begin to evoke this condition of coming-after. Even as the practices I have in mind often treat given genres or mediums as somehow completed, they do not pastiche them in a posthistorical manner. On the contrary, they are committed to formal transformations – as long as these transformations also speak to extrinsic concerns. In this way these practices point to a semi-autonomy of genre or medium, but in a reflexive way that opens onto social issues ("a closed world that is open to the world" is how one contemporary artist puts it); in so doing they often belie these very oppositions of intrinsic and extrinsic, inside and outside.¹⁰ Through formal transformation that is also social engagement, then, such work helps to restore a mnemonic dimension to contemporary art, and to resist the presentist totality of design in culture today.

My first version of living-on involves *traumatic* experience. Of course, for the avant-garde to be recovered, it first had to be lost, and this breach, which began with its suppression by Nazis and Stalinists in the 1930s, was deepened with the trauma of war and Holocaust in the 1940s. More than a historical divide in art, this breach induced a cultural blockage, "a failure to mourn," that long persisted. In our own time, however, this failure (or refusal) of memory has promoted a compensatory imperative to remember in the form of new museums and trauma studies of all sorts – an imperative that sometimes seems more automatic than mnemonic. In both popular culture and academic discourse "trauma" has come to float free as a general signifier of the structuring not only of subjectivity but of history as such. Today some of the most provoc-

ative novelists and filmmakers also conceive experience in this paradoxical modality – of experience that is *not* experienced, at least not punctually, that comes too early or too late to be registered consciously, that can only be repeated compulsively or pieced together after the fact. Often for these novelists (I think of Paul Auster, Russell Banks, Dennis Cooper, Don DeLillo, Steve Erickson, Denis Johnson, Ian McEwan, Toni Morrison, Tim O'Brien, and W. G. Sebald among others, but such filmmakers as Atom Egoyan should also be cited) narrative runs in reverse or moves very erratically, and the peripeteia is an event that happened long ago or not at all, in keeping with the ambiguous nature of trauma as real or fantasmatic.

As one might expect, contemporary art that treats "the German Question" is often concerned with the traumatic, whether in terms of the ruins of the Nazi past (as evoked by Hans Haacke in his extraordinary *Germania* installation in the 1993 Venice Biennale, where he broke apart the marble floor of the Nazi-era pavilion) or the unburied persistence of this past in reconstructed Germany (as evoked by Gerhard Richter in his equally extraordinary *October 18*, 1977, a 1988 suite of paintings concerning the Baader–Meinhof gang). However, my example here is a 1989 installation by Robert Gober that evokes the trauma of American racism, and so exceeds the limits of the last century. In one room Gober hung wallpaper of penises and vaginas, anuses and navels, sketched in white line on black ground and punctuated with chest-high drains, and in another room wallpaper of schematic drawings of two men in light blue on pale yellow, one white and asleep (from a Bloomingdale's beefcake advertisement), the other black and lynched (from a 1920s Texas cartoon). If the first background presented sexual difference as the overlooked pattern of our everyday lives, the second suggested that racial antagonism is another occluded structure of our daily grinds.

Each room was further split into two registers: in the center of the first was a bag of doughnuts on a pedestal; in the center of the second a wedding gown attended by bags of "Fine Fare Cat Litter" set along the wall (all objects and images looked found but were handmade). Thus, from space to space and from images to objects, Gober put a series of oppositions in play: male and female, bachelors and bride, white and black, immaculate gown and stale food, purity and pollution, dream and reality, and, above all, sexual difference and racial difference.

Rather than map these oppositions onto one another, however, Gober intertwined the terms in an ensemble that evoked the intricacies of fear, desire, and pain deep in our political imaginary of race and sexuality. The installation prompted the viewer to tease out this old American knot in the form of a broken allegory: What is the relationship between the two men? Does the black man haunt the white man? Does the white man dream the black man? If so, does the white man conjure the black man in hatred, guilt, or desire? Is the woman implied by the wedding gown the object of their struggle? If so, is she the pretext of their violence, the relay of their longing, or both? What is the role of heterosexual fantasy in racial politics? Of racial fantasy in heterosexual politics? And how does homosexuality or homosociality come into play? Finally, how does one *disarticulate* all these terms – clarify them in order to question them? Traumatically mute, the installation intimated that our traumas of identity and difference are collective as well as individual, and that our racist-homophobic past lives on, nightmarishly, in the present.

The Gober installation developed certain elements of Duchamp, such as the bride from *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (1915–23), his large glass divided into two registers, and the diorama of sexual difference from *Etant donnés* (1946–66), his mannequin splayed in a landscape on view at the Philadelphia



The traumatic: in this 1989 installation Robert Gober evokes the intricacies of fear, desire, and pain in the American imaginary of race and sexuality.

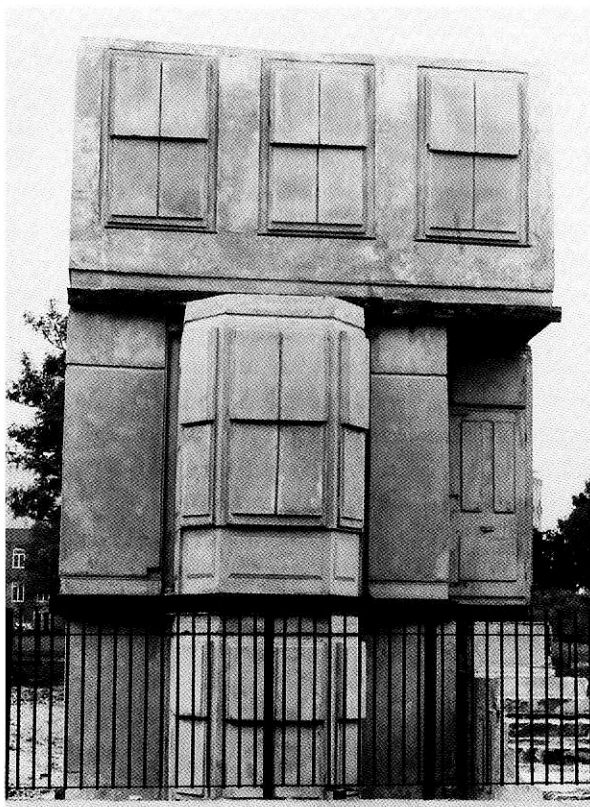
Museum of Art. The installation thus existed in the shadow not only of traumatic history but of significant art; the first helped to charge the second, the second to frame the first, and in the process both were transformed in the reciprocal way noted above.¹¹ Of

course such "shadowing" by artistic precedents is primordial; it is the primary element that allows any art to be constituted as such, as a discipline that lives on at all. But often the shadowing in contemporary art is more literally *spectral*. It is announced as such in many titles (there are "ghosts" in Paul Auster, Jim Jarmusch, and Rachel Whiteread, to cite but one example in fiction, film, and art); it also operates formally at the level of genre or medium. The shadowing I have in mind has little of the "anxiety of influence" described by Harold Bloom in modernist poetry; yet neither is there much "ecstasy of influence" along the postmodernist lines of the high-spirited meta-fiction of university novelists like John Barth and Robert Coover, or of the homage-laden neo-genre cinema of film-school directors like Martin Scorsese and Brian de Palma.¹² The shadowing in play today is more muted, a sort of outlining and shading, in the manner that *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) outlines and shades *The Hours* (1998) by Michael Cunningham.¹³

This spectrality informs the recent work of Jim Jarmusch, in particular *Dead Man* (1995) and *Ghost Dog* (2000), both of which exist in the shadow of old genres. In the hire of a minor mobster, "Ghost Dog" is a black assassin who lives according to the ancient code of Japanese warriors; *Ghost Dog*, then, is an amalgam of Gangster and Samurai films that "comes after" these genres in a way that renders both at once archaic and exotic, strangely animated. *Dead Man* has a similar relation to the Western: the story of the westward journey of a young man from Cleveland named William Blake, it is a repository of genre themes from silent Westerns to anti-Westerns: a white man befriended by an Indian guide, an innocent man tracked by murderous bounty-hunters, the West portrayed as a field of rapacious death. If *Dead Man* treats the Western as if from its own afterlife, it is also produced out of the passing of the West; and both its protagonists are spectral as well:

William Blake is mistaken by his native guide "Nobody" for a spirit from the dead – as the great Romantic visionary who must be returned to the after-world. At several levels, then, the film is a spirit-quest of the already-dead. "After the end of history, the spirit comes by *coming back* [revenant]," Derrida writes of the "hauntology" that he deems "the dominant influence on discourse today"; "it figures *both* a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself, again and again."¹⁴

In contemporary art this ghostly persistence is especially strong in the work of Rachel Whiteread. In the late 1980s she began to cast everyday objects like bathtubs and mattresses, closets and rooms, in materials like rubber and resin, plaster and concrete. As the objects are used as molds, the castings are the negative spaces of these things; as a result they are at once obvious in production and ambiguous in reference. For though her sculptures are based on utilitarian objects and everyday sites, they negate function and harden space into mass, and though they appear whole and solid, they also seem fragmentary and spectral. More ambiguously still, these literal traces suggest symbolic traces, memories of childhood, family, and community: they conjure up "the cultural space of the home" as a place of beginnings overwhelmed by endings, as a place haunted by absence.¹⁵ For this reason her work is often associated with the uncanny, that is, with the return of familiar things made strange by repression, and sometimes her death-masks of familial objects and maternal spaces do render the homey *unheimlich*. But in the end they do not evoke the return of the repressed so much as the persistence of the lost: they are less *unheimlich* than homeless in effect. Not only psychological, these castings "carry the marks of history written on the social body."¹⁶ In this regard they too possess the double reflexivity mentioned above: they recall both Minimalist objects and Pop signs, but they render both ghostly – spirits of the social past.



The spectral: in *House* (1993), a casting of an East London terrace house, Rachel Whiteread uses literal traces to evoke social absences.

This is especially true of her most celebrated work, *House* (1993), a concrete casting of a terrace house scheduled for demolition in a working-class neighborhood of East London. Her negative imprint of these vanished rooms was inscribed not only with the outlines of

window sills, door frames, and utility lines, but also with the traces of past inhabitants; as such it stood in a park for a time like an unrequited ghost. Its great provocation was to connect the psychic and the social in this way, to link “the lost spaces of childhood” with the lost working-class culture of East London, both threatened by rapacious development. Perhaps its opponents grasped this connection – the local council first approved the casting, then voted to demolish it – or perhaps they refused a public sculpture that did not idealize social life or monumentalize historical memory. In any case *House* is a public sculpture that is obdurate in its living-on – though it no longer exists materially.

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A third strategy in the condition of coming-after is the staging of *nonsynchronous* forms; prominent practices that feature outmoded genres include the slide projections of James Coleman, “the drawings for projection” of William Kentridge, the narrative silhouettes of Kara Walker, and the filmic installations of Stan Douglas.¹⁷ The strategy here is to make a new medium out of the remnants of old forms, and to hold together the different temporal markers in a single visual structure. Once more, in the best instances, a double reflexivity is at work: a medium is (re)constituted in a recursive way that is nonetheless open to social content – in a way, moreover, that reminds us that “form” is often nothing but “content” that has become historically sedimented. In his drawings for projection, for example, Kentridge links an old tradition of satirical drawing (William Hogarth, Honoré Daumier, George Grosz, Ben Shahn, and so on) with an archaic technique of filmic animation (devices like irises, inter-titles, and musical accompaniment). He synchronizes these nonsynchronous forms, then trains them on occluded aspects of apartheid life in his native South Africa. This artisanal kind of

projected drawing thus points to lost moments in art history (e.g., before the industrialization of cinema) that serve as formal analogues to lost moments in social history – lost in the sense of suppressed, skipped over, or displaced.

"The outmoded" might be too inflected by Surrealist associations to capture this last connection between displaced forms and histories. The Surrealists, Benjamin writes in his 1928 essay on the movement, were

the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the "outmoded" [*veraltet*], in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them . . . They bring the immense force of "atmosphere" concealed in these things to the point of explosion.¹⁸

Such a weird array of things is not the stuff of a renewed medium; on the contrary, it is part of the Surrealist project to "explode" conventional categories of cultural objects. In this way it presumes a reified tabulation of artistic mediums to disrupt – which, as argued elsewhere in this book, is precisely not our problem. There is the further dilemma that "the outmoded" might now be outmoded too, recuperated as a device in the very process that it once seemed to question – the heightened obsolescence of fashion and other commodity lines. Yet one aspect of the outmoded is still valid, the one plied by most of the artists mentioned above, and Surrealism is again a touchstone. "Balzac was the first to speak of the ruins of the bourgeoisie," Benjamin writes in a later comment on the Surrealists. "But only Surrealism exposed them to view. The development of the forces of production reduced the wish symbols of the previous century to rubble even before the monuments

representing them had crumbled."¹⁹ The "wish symbols" here are the capitalist wonders of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie at the height of its confidence, such as "the arcades and interiors, the exhibitions and panoramas." These structures fascinated the Surrealists nearly a century later – when further capitalist development had turned them into "residues of a dream world" or, again, "rubble even before the monuments which represented them had crumbled." According to Benjamin, for the Surrealists to haunt these outmoded spaces was to tap "the revolutionary energies" that were trapped there. But it may be more accurate (and less utopian) to say that the Surrealists registered the mnemonic signals encrypted in these structures – signals that might not otherwise have reached the present. This deployment of the nonsynchronous pressures the totalist assumptions of capitalist culture, and questions its claim to be timeless; it also challenges this culture with its own wish symbols, and asks it to recall its own forfeited dreams of liberty, equality, and fraternity. It is this mnemonic dimension of the outmoded that might still be mined today.

Of course what counts as the outmoded has changed radically. Not long ago film was the medium of the future; now it is a privileged index of the recent-past, and so a primary element in a nonsynchronous protest against the presentist totality of design culture.²⁰ In this regard what early arcades were for the Surrealists, early cinema is for contemporary artists like Stan Douglas and Janet Cardiff: a repository of old sensations, private fantasies, and collective hopes – "residues of a dream world." "Both in terms of presentation and the subject matter of my work," Douglas has remarked, "I have been preoccupied with failed utopias and obsolete technologies. To a large degree, my concern is not to redeem these past events but to reconsider them: to understand why these utopian moments did not fulfill themselves, what larger forces kept



The nonsynchronous: in the film installation *Overture* (1986) Stan Douglas explores the residues of “failed utopias and obsolete technologies.”

a local moment a minor moment: and what was valuable there – what might still be useful today.”²¹ To cite only one instance in his work, *Overture* (1986) is a film installation that combines archival footage from the Edison Company from 1899 and 1901 with audio text from *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913–22). The old film was shot from a camera mounted on a train engine as it passed along cliffs and through tunnels in British Columbia; the Proust is a meditation on the state of semi-consciousness that exists between sleeping and waking. There are six extracts from Proust and three sections of film (with tunnel passages extended by black leader), so that when the footage recurs it is matched with a different text, in a way that tests our sense of repetition and difference, memory

and displacement. *Overture* is concerned not only with the transition from sleeping to waking, with the rebirth of consciousness that is also a return to mortality, but also with “the passing of narrative form from one medium, the novel, to another, film. At this juncture, a utopian possibility simultaneously opens up and shuts down.”²² It juxtaposes moments of rift – in subjective experience as well as in cultural history – when other possibilities of self and expression are glimpsed, lost, and glimpsed again. “Obsolete forms of communication,” Douglas has commented, “become an index of an understanding of the world lost to us.” To recover these forms is to “address moments when history could have gone one way or another. We live in the residue of such moments, and for better or worse their potential is not yet spent.”²³

If the strategy of the nonsynchronous is to hold together markers of different times, then the strategy of the *incongruent*, the fourth and final one to be mentioned here, is to juxtapose traces of different spaces. I have in mind the hybrid objects and sited tableaux of David Hammons, Jimmie Durham, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Rikrit Tiravanija, and Gabriel Orozco. Often performative and provisional, this work projects a lyrical kind of criticality: it complicates found things with invented ones, reframes given spaces, and frequently leaves behind enigmatic site-specific souvenirs as it does so.

Above I suggested that the expanded field of postmodernist art has largely imploded, and that the recovered devices of neo-avant-garde art are mostly attenuated. Paradoxically enabled by historical distance and/or geopolitical difference, these artists have turned this imploded field into the departure point for an expansive practice once again, in which certain aspects of both postmodernist and neo-avant-garde art are recovered. For example, like postmodernist “sculpture in the expanded field,” this postcolonial sculpture in the

incongruent field is defined, at least initially, in the negative: "Not the monument, not the painting, not the picture," Durham has remarked of his unnamable objects. Rather, like neo-avant-garde artists before him, he seeks an "eccentric discourse of art" that poses "investigatory questions about what sort of thing [art] might be, but always within a political situation of the time."²⁴ This formulation pertains to the others as well; and, as might be expected, the "investigatory questions" are framed with neo-avant-garde devices that are renewed through displacement and/or estrangement. For instance, Hammons has offered pathetic objects for sale on the street that exist in a parodic relation to commodity exchange (e.g., found doll shoes, snowballs in various sizes), and Tiravanija has made gift offerings in galleries that point to an alternative to the capitalist nexus of art (e.g., his own preparation of Thai dishes). Again a double reflexivity is at a premium here: "what sort of thing [art] might be . . . within a political situation."

Not the monument, not the picture: Gabriel Orozco often mixes these categories with mundane life. He has played subversively with the most traditional of sculptural procedures, such as modeling and cutting.²⁵ In *Yielding Stone* (1992) he rolled a plasticine ball in the street in such a way as to pick up random bits of urban detritus: here the tradition of modeling was recast as an almost automatist practice, in which the everyday world, not the expressive artist, made the marks. In *La DS* (1993) Orozco shifted not the agency of sculpture but the object. Rather than conventional materials of wood or stone, he cut an old Citroën DS in half, excised a portion, and stuck the two parts together again: here the tradition of carving was reshaped into an almost readymade practice, in which destruction and reclamation were also combined. In this practice of incongruent objects in an imploded field, Orozco may transfer the attributes of one medium to another medium, as in *Yielding Stone*

where the indexicality associated with photography becomes the property of sculpture.²⁶ So too a sculptural process may prepare a photographic tableau, as in *Island within an Island* (1993) where the (de)compositional strategy of installation art sets up the photograph – in this case a miming of the Lower Manhattan skyline in the background with found debris in the foreground. Folding medium onto medium, space onto space, island onto island, Orozco often wins critical pleasures from the otherwise painful ironies of dislocation and dispersal. After the events of 11 September 2001 this work of subversive mimicry has also taken on new meaning as an image of remembrance, of coming-after and living-on.²⁷



The incongruent: *Island within an Island* (1993) by Gabriel Orozco.